DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 273 156 FL 015 985

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TITLE Some Common Components in Training Bilingual, ESL, Foreign Language, and Mainstream Teachers.
PUB DATE 85
NOTE 11p.; In: English Language Development. Proceedings of a Conference on Issues in English Language Development for Minority Language Education (Arlington, VA, July 24, 1985); see FL 015 974.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Bilingual Education; Bilingual Teachers; Comparative Analysis; *Curriculum Design; *Educational Needs; Educational Research; Elementary Secondary Education; *English (Second Language); *Language Teachers; Limited English Speaking; Relevance (Education); Second Language Instruction; *Teacher Education

ABSTRACT

The four distinct groups of teachers (mainstream, ESL, bilingual, and foreign language teachers) responsible for instruction in English as a second language (ESL) to limited-English-speaking children are compared in terms of the standards set for each in teacher training curricula and the common topics of research in each of the four fields. It is concluded that overlaps in teacher preparation requirements, commonalities in discipline-specific standards, and similarities in training for dealing with like groups of students imply that differentiated teacher grouping helps to intensify the focus and specificity of training, and that attention to common needs and preparation makes the process of organizing, designing, and implementing inservice training activities more effective. It is also suggested that a commonality of research topics in the four areas provides a cohesive framework from which to develop training. (MSE)

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Some Common Components in Training Bilingual, ESL, Foreign Language, and Mainstream Teachers

Denise McKeon

> In language teaching the life and death of an idea rests mainly on the teacher who is to apply it. The fate of an idea in the classroom depends on the concepts and instincts a teacher has received from his training and the amount he is required to do. (Kelly 1969, 384)

What is that fate of the ideas now emerging from research regarding the total educational development of limited-English-proficient (LEP) students? How can teacher training and teacher preparation programs best provide the necessary conceptual growth and skill development for the numbers and kinds of teachers currently involved in the English acquisition process of such students? Is the amount we are asking teachers to do in the classroom reasonable, or even feasible, given the availability of classroom support systems that help translate theory into practice? Where do we start in order to ensure the survival and healthy implementation of such promising theoretical models?

Perhaps the first step is in providing more relevant training by identifying the population to be trained, the skills and knowledge this population brings to the training experience, and the broad research themes whose classroom applications may be fully exploited through the training process.

In their presentation of the Teachers Language Skills Survey (TLSS), O'Malley and Waggoner (1984) provide key descriptions of the training and preparation of teachers working with LEP students. O'Malley and Waggoner state the following:

- Approximately half of all public school teachers in the United States have immediate or previous experience with LEP students in their classes. Of these teachers only about 6 percent have taken even one academic course to learn how to teach English as a second language (ESL).
- Only 30 percent of the teachers who reported that they taught ESL had received at least one course in ESL. Additionally, ESL teachers

FL 015 985

were more likely than teachers in general to be teaching in preschool or the early grades. Acheson (1977) reports that most teacher preparation programs in English as a second language prepared trainees for jobs at the secondary level.

- Teachers teaching ESL and using a non-English language for instruction are twice as likely to have had ESL preparation; about three-quarters had taken at least one course in ESL.
- Approximately 35 percent of teachers teaching ESL had experience in teaching a foreign language, compared to less than 10 percent of teachers in general.

Thus we find four distinctively different groups of teachers directly responsible for the ESL instruction of LEP students: (1) regular classroom or mainstream teachers, (2) ESL teachers, (3) teachers using a non-English language or bilingual teachers, and (4) foreign language teachers.

What do we know about the specific training and preparation that each type of teacher brings to the ESL situation? To what degree are any discipline-specific skills or general training previously received appropriate to the current ESL teaching situation of each? In order to determine the relative comparability of teaching preparations, we turn to sets of standards developed for teacher education programs (see table 1). These standards, while varying across institutions with regard to the nature and degree of implementation, afford, at the minimum, an overview of the nature of previous training that teachers in the four categories can be reasonably expected to have. Table 1 (see page 100) illustrates a fair amount of overlap with regard to standards set for the first three groups of teachers: bilingual/bicultural, ESL, and foreign language. The degree of overlap of the first three categories with the fourth, that of mainstream teachers, is negligible (except for the multicultural component). However, if the first group of teachers (bilingual/bicultural) is compared with the fourth group (mainstream), the standard which states that bilingual teachers should "possess a standard credential in another area of certification" (table 1, column) suggests a different pattern of overlap. Additionally, if the grade level focus of professional preparation is taken into account, both the ESL and foreign language preparation programs are more likely to be directed toward students preparing to teach at the secondary level (Acheson 1977; Rhodes 1985).

Overlaps in teacher preparation requirements, commonalities in discipline-specific standards, and similarities in training for dealing with like groups of students (minority language students, elementary or secondary level students) implies that differentiated grouping (certain types of teachers grouped for certain types of topics) may help to intensify both the focus and specificity of training (McKeon, in press). Attention not only

to common needs but also to common preparations may make the process of organizing, designing, and implementing inservice training activities more effective.

In addition to capitalizing on similar teacher preparation, we must begin to identify areas of training that not only assist practitioners in achieving more comprehensive standards than were previously necessary but that also provide practitioners with the necessary support to translate newer theory into practice.

Emerging research across the four discipline areas (bilingual, ESL, foreign language, and mainstream education) shows evidence that specific topics within several broad themes are surfacing in the literature of each of the disciplines almost simultaneously (see table 2, page 102). It would appear that this convergence, this commonality of research topics—represented not only in the literature specific to linguistic minority education but also to mainstream education as well—would provide a cohesive framework from which to develop training. (Table 2 should in no way be considered a comprehensive treatment of all currently emerging themes or currently available research. It is, rather, a brief overview.)

While the research themes have been somewhat arbitrarily placed into certain disciplines and topic areas and may, in many cases, have emerged in ESL and bilingual categories simultaneously—e.g., Cummins (1979), Wong Fillmore (1979), Krashen (1982)—the dual nature of the applicability of these themes is even stronger support for including such research as viable training topics.

Training developed from a common, yet multidisciplined research base (one that speaks to the specific preparations of the groups of teachers involved) may allow for the fine tuning of teacher education by allowing teacher trainers to reinforce, refine, and expand topics through a comparative analysis of the research.

Table 1

Bilingual/Bicultural,* ESL,* Foreign Language,* and Mainstream Teacher Education Standards: A Comparison**

Bilingual/Bicultural	ESL	Foreign Language	(General) Mainstream
Programs must ensure that students possess: • Standard teacher's credential in another area of certification • Proficiency and the ability to instruct students in English and target language • Knowledge of history/culture of target population and the U.S. • Ability to adapt materials • Learning experiences in sociology and linguistics • Ability to relate to students, parents, community members	Programs must ensure that students possess: • Personal qualities that contribute to success as teacher, assure respect for students and their culture • Experience in learning another language, knowledge of another culture • Knowledge of general linguistics and applied linguistics and their application to language teaching • Knowledge of the ways in which L_1 culture and L_2 culture differ	Programs must ensure that students possess: • Knowledge of work in phonology, composition, and linguistics of L_2; literature • Proficiency in L_2 (spoken and written), including: — Awareness of differences between L_1/L_2; ability to apply awareness to teaching — Knowledge of ways in which L_1 culture and L_2 culture differ — Knowledge of language pedagogy	Programs should consist of: • Multicultural component—knowledge of such issues as participatory democracy, racism/sexism, values clarification, linguistic variation/learning styles Special education component including ability to: — Recognize and refer exceptional learners — Contribute to design/implementation of curriculum

- Proficiency in teaching methods
- Awareness of dialectal differences
- Awareness of differences between L_1/L_2; ability to apply awareness to teaching

- Knowledge of language acquisition—L_1, L_2; sociocultural variables in language learning
- Knowledge of language pedagogy
- Knowledge of testing principles; assessment of language proficiency
- Understanding of uniqueness and interrelationships of various life styles in a pluralistic society
- Proficiency in spoken and written English

- —Knowledge of specialized techniques (media use)
- —Knowledge of relationship of foreign language study to other areas of the curriculum
- Knowledge of literature, history, geography, contemporary civilization of appropriate countries

- —Accommodate learners through instructional techniques/management strategies
- General studies including:
  - —Symbolics of information—
    (1) languages, linguistics
    (2) math, logic
    (3) information theory
  - —Natural/behavioral sciences
  - —Humanities
- Professional studies, including:
  - —Content for the teaching speciality
  - —Humanistic/behavioral studies
  - —Teaching/learning theory including clinical experience
  - —Practicum

National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (1977).

**National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (1982).*

Table 2

Common Research Themes Across Disciplines: A Sampling

Themes	ESL	Bilingual	Foreign Language	Mainstream
1. Learning and linguistic theory and research, including the identification, development, and use of strategies (cognitive, linguistic, metacognitive, and social)	Chamot and O'Malley 1984 Dulay and Burt 1977 Dulay, Burt, and Krashen 1982 Krashen 1982 O'Malley et al., in press Ventriglia 1982 Wong Fillmore 1979 Wong Fillmore and Swain 1984	Cummins 1979 De Avila 1984 De Avila and Duncan 1979	Asher 1982 Byrnes 1984 Gingràs 1978 Krashen et al. 1984 Stevens 1984	de Bono 1983 Goodman 1985 Guilford 1967 Jagger and Smith-Burke 1985 Sternberg 1984 Wagner and Sternberg 1984
2. Language and the content areas; the interrelatedness of learning	Cuevas 1984 Krashen 1982 Saville-Troike 1984	Cummins 1979 Dawe 1983 De Avila 1984 Kessler and Quinn 1984	Campbell et al. 1985 Lambert and Tucker 1972 Rivers 1985 Savignon 1983	Booth Olson 1984 Fulweiler and Young 1982 Taba 1964
3. Instructional design/instructional organization based on linguistic/cognitive theory research	Chamot 1983 Krashen and Terrell 1983 McKeon 1985	De Avila 1984 Yawkey 1982	Met 1984 Terrell 1977	de Bono 1981 Labinowicz 1980 Meeker 1969 Michaels and Foster 1985 Weikart et al. 1971

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